

# Hack

-n-

# Slash

## Gamemasters Edition



A Return To A Simpler Time

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## Characters

Much like a movie or play, characters play out their roles in Hack-n-Slash adventures. Players create their characters to be the heroes of the story using the rules in this chapter.

Player controlled characters are referred to as heroes while those controlled by the gamemaster are called non-player characters or NPCs for short. All characters are represented by a number of traits including Attributes, Skills, Gifts and Faults.

### Trait Levels

Hack-n-Slash uses ordinary words to describe the level of ability in various traits (Attributes, Skills) of a character. A specific trait's level is represented by one of the words listed below from worst to best.

-4	<b>Abysmal</b>
-3	<b>Terrible</b>
-2	<b>Poor</b>
-1	<b>Mediocre</b>
0	<b>Fair</b>
1	<b>Good</b>
2	<b>Great</b>
3	<b>Superb</b>
4	<b>Legendary</b>

To remember the order compare adjacent words. If as a beginner your eventual goal is to become an excellent game player, for example ask yourself if you'd rather be called a Fair game player or a Mediocre game player. This scale is also listed on the Character Sheet for easy reference.

### Step By Step Character Creation

Characters are created by determining a general character concept or background, what trait levels they have for Attributes/Skills, and what Gifts/Faults they possess. The sections that follow provide a step by step method of creating Hack-n-Slash characters.

#### Step #1: Character Concept

Before you determine what abilities your character may possess you should first decide your characters profession, background, personality and other details that make him unique. This concept of what the character is like will help guide you through the remaining steps of character creation.

#### Step #2: Select Race

Select the race you wish your character to be from those available in the Races section. Race determines gifts, attributes and skill levels available for character creation.



#### Step #3: Attributes

Determine the attribute levels for your character. Attributes represent the basic physical, mental and spiritual capabilities of the character. Beginning heroes may have no attribute higher than Superb.

Players receive a number of free attribute levels as determined by their race with which to raise attributes. A player may raise his Strength attribute (which is Fair by default for a human) to Good by spending one free attribute level. He could then spend another free level to raise Strength again to Great, and a third free attribute level to raise his Reason to Good. This would exhaust a human characters free levels.

When the free attribute levels have been exhausted an attribute can be raised further by lowering another attribute an equal amount. From the previous example, Strength can be raised one more level (to Superb) if the player lowers the characters Perception to Mediocre to compensate for the increase in Strength.

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Example: Billy gives his fighter Great Strength (2 levels), Good Agility (1 level), Good Perception (1 level), and lowers his Reason to Mediocre (-1 level) to compensate for his increased Perception. (Total 3 levels)

---

### Action Resolution

A hero is defined by his actions. What he does and how well he performs often means the difference between victory and defeat. Players roll dice, checking the result against their hero's appropriate trait to determine the success or failure of a particular action. This section details how to perform actions and determine the results.

#### The Dice

Hack-n-Slash uses Fudge Dice for action resolution and combat. Fudge Dice are six-sided dice with two sides marked +1, two sides marked -1 and two sides unmarked. They are commercially available from Grey Ghost Games. Alternatively, those without Fudge Dice available may use six sided dice instead treating 1-2 as a -1 result, 3-4 as an unmarked result and 5-6 as a +1 result.

#### Trait Checks

Any time your hero uses a skill or attribute, a check is made to see how well they performed.

Make a check by rolling 4 Fudge Dice and totaling the result. For example: a roll of [+1, +1, blank, -1] would result in a +1 for that die roll. This total is then applied to the trait being checked to determine how well your hero performed. For example: applying the +1 die result to a Good climbing skill would yield a Great result for that climbing attempt.

#### Modifiers

A heroes trait level may be temporarily improved or reduced depending upon the situation. For example: lock picking is at -2 without the proper tools or +1 if a fine set of lock picks are available. If the attempt is made in a dimly lit room an additional -1 would be applied.

#### Unopposed Actions

An Action which isn't influenced by anyone else is considered unopposed. Examples include: jumping a wide chasm, climbing a cliff, etc.

To perform an unopposed action the player simply makes a trait check comparing the result to a target difficulty level, typically set by the gamemaster. For example: the gamemaster determines walking a tightrope requires a Great agility roll. So, a hero with good agility would need at least a +1 result on 4dF for a successful tightrope walk.

#### Opposed Actions

Actions are opposed when other people (or animals, etc.) may have an effect on the outcome of the action. In this

case, each participant makes an appropriate trait check and the results are compared to determine the outcome. For example: an arm wrestling match would be determined by each contestant making a trait check of their Strength attribute and comparing the results.

#### Relative Degree

This refers to how well a hero did compared to another participant in an Opposed Action and is expressed as a number of levels. For example, if a Hero gets a Trait check of Good in a fight, and his NPC foe gets a Mediocre result, he beat her by two levels. The relative degree is +2 from his perspective, -2 from hers.

#### Secret Rolls

Occasionally, the GM will roll in secret for the hero. There are times when even a failed roll would give the player knowledge he wouldn't otherwise have. These are usually information rolls. For example: if the GM asks the player to make a roll against the perception attribute and the player fails the character doesn't notice anything out of the ordinary. But the player now knows that there is something out of the ordinary that his character didn't notice... Far better for the GM to make the roll in secret and only mention it on a successful result.

#### Automatic Success or Failure

There is no need to roll the dice when a character performs an action that is so easy as to be automatic. Likewise, an action so difficult that it has no chance of success requires no roll, it simply can't be done. Dice are used solely in the middle ground, where the outcome of an action is uncertain. The GM is encouraged to keep die-rolling to a minimum. Do not make the players roll the dice when their characters do mundane things

#### Situation Rolls

The GM may occasionally want a die roll that is not based on a character trait but on the overall situation or outside circumstances. This situational roll is simply a normal Hack-n-Slash die roll but not based on any trait. This is most commonly used with reaction and damage rolls but can be used elsewhere as needed. For example: the player worried about witnesses asks if there are any townsfolk in the alley. The GM makes a situation roll deciding that on a Good or better result no townsfolk are present.

#### NPC Reactions

When the GM is in doubt as to how an NPC will react in a given situation she should secretly make a situation roll. The higher the result the better the reaction. The reaction roll can be modified up or down by circumstances, bribes, appropriate PC traits, etc.

## Combat

The sound of clashing steel and battle cries fill the air, only the most mighty heroes will survive this day. As one might expect combat is often at the core of Hack-n-Slash adventures. This section details how to resolve combat, apply wounds and tend to the survivors once the dust settles.

## Combat Rounds

Combat is resolved as a series of Combat Rounds, each round representing 6 seconds of time. During each round a hero may move and engage in melee combat, fire a ranged weapon, cast a spell or any other action the gamemaster rules is possible in a combat round.

## Performing Tasks During Combat

Sometimes heroes need to perform non-combat tasks during a battle. For example: picking a lock while your friends keep the rattlings off of you. Heroes not engaged in melee combat may spend one or more rounds working toward any task simply by announcing to the gamemaster what they are doing each turn. Progress is made each round toward completing the task unless the hero is wounded in which case the round is wasted.

## Melee Combat

Any combat which involves striking an opponent with a fist or handheld weapon is considered melee combat. Each combatant makes an Opposed action roll against an appropriate trait (usually a weapon skill). On a relative degree of 0, the combat round is a stand-off - the fighters either circled each other looking for an opening or exchanged blows on each others shields without scoring any damage.

If the result is a relative degree other than 0 and the minimum to hit (see below) is achieved or surpassed, the winner checks to see if he hit hard enough to damage the loser. In general, the better the hit (the greater the relative degree), the greater the likelihood of damage. (See Wounds)

## Minimum To Hit

Hitting an opponent of equal scale requires at least a Poor result, otherwise no hit is scored. That is, a human needs to score a Poor blow (and still win the Opposed Action) in order to hit another human sized opponent. If both combatants roll worse than the minimum to hit, the round is a standoff.

Opponents significantly greater in size (2 or more scale larger) are easier to hit requiring only a Terrible result, while extremely small (2 or more scale smaller) opponents require at least a Mediocre result to hit.





## Speak With Dead

Cost: 2

Range: Sight

Duration: 1 Minute

Concentration: 1 round

Allows the caster to speak with nearby spirits of the deceased. The spirits are not compelled to help the caster or provide any meaningful information. They will react to the caster as any other NPC would. The subject falling down as a result of this spell is not awakened by the fall.

## Speed

Cost: 2

Range: Sight

Duration: 1 Minute

Concentration: 1 Round

Grants the subject +1 speed for the duration of the spell.

## Staff

Cost: 4

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

Concentration: 1 Hour

Enchants a quarterstaff or staff to act as if it was an extension of the casters body, thus enabling the weapon to be ready while the magus casts spells.

## Ward

Cost: 2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 Day

Concentration: 1 Minute

Creates a protective enchantment on a doorway or one square yard sized patch of ground which will notify the caster if any creature with hostile intentions passes through or travels over it.

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## Good Spells

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### Detect Lies

Cost: 2

Range: Sight

Duration: 10 Minutes

Concentration: None

Allows the caster to know if the subject of the spell is lying to him for the duration of the spell. He won't know the truth, only that its not what he's being told.

### Glamour

Cost: 2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 Hour

Concentration: 1 Round

Alters the subjects facial features, hair and general build to that of the casters choosing. Glamour may be used to conceal ones true appearance, imitate a specific person or even to appear to be of another humanoid race.

### Healing

Cost: 3

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

Concentration: 1 Round

Heals the subject removing one Hurt, Bloody or less serious wound.

### Fireball (Opposed Agility-2)

Cost: 1-3

Range: 10/25/50

Duration: Instant

Concentration: 1 Round / Mana Spent

Creates a large ball of flame and propels it toward the target. A successful casting results in the target being struck by an attack with an Offense equal to twice the mana used to cast the spell.

## Dungeons

Dungeons are the heart of many a brave tale. Forgotten strongholds with vast riches, ripe for the taking by those brave enough to delve into the dark places of the world. This section provides rules to randomly determine the layout, challenges and treasures found in such places.

### Usage

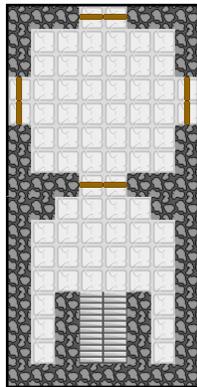
Gamemasters (or players wishing to run solitaire or group games without a gamemaster) may create 'Roll As You Go' adventures simply by using the rules and tables found in this section to randomly generate dungeons as the heroes explore them.

### Map Tiles

These rules use 8x8 square dungeon tiles to map out dungeons as they are explored. Players may draw these tiles out on paper as they go or those wishing to play with miniatures may find printable map tiles on our web site.

### Entrance

Dungeon maps begin with a stairway tile (legendary) and a 4-way intersection tile (fair). The stairway is the exit from the dungeon, and the character(s) begin play in the 4-way intersection tile.



### Moving Between Tiles

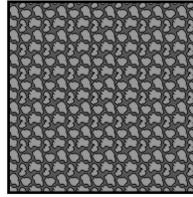
Heroes move from one map tile to another by exiting their current tile via one of its exits (doors or archways). Map tiles may not be moved through as long as there are unresolved challenges or active traps. Once any traps have been sprung or disarmed and any monster challenges dealt with the tile may be moved through freely.

### Running Away

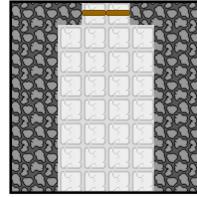
Heroes can exit a tile by leaving the way they entered it if they cannot disarm a discovered trap or have successfully evaded combat with a monster challenge. Any monsters will not follow them (unless a GM wishes it) but will remain there awaiting the heroes return.

### Layout

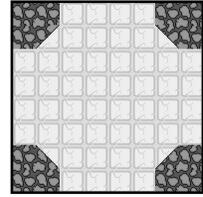
If a hero moves through an exit where no map tile has been placed roll 4dF and consult the following table to determine which tile to place.



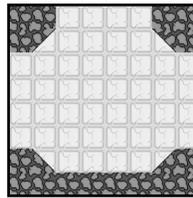
Abysmal (-4)



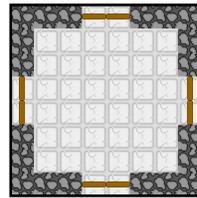
Terrible (-3)



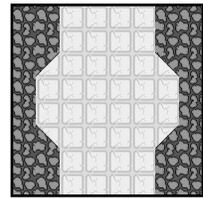
Poor (-2)



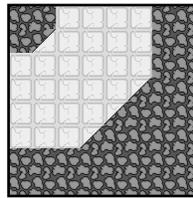
Mediocre (-1)



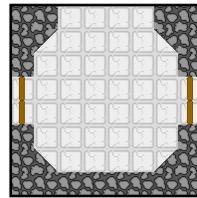
Fair (0)



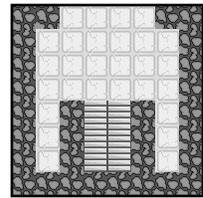
Good (+1)



Great (+2)



Superb (+3)



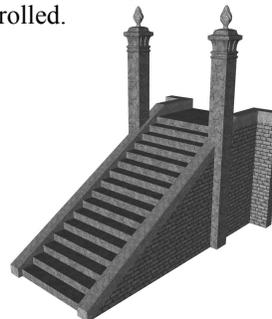
Legendary (+4)

### Tile Placement

Once the dungeon tile has been determined it may be placed in any orientation at the players discretion although if there is not a clear passage between tiles then heroes may not travel between them.

### Stairways & Levels

Dungeons are typically organized into levels with the heroes starting on level 0. Stairway tiles have a special purpose, allowing heroes to travel down to find a whole new dungeon level. Each new level starts like the first with a stairway (leading up to the previous level) and a 4-way intersection. New dungeon levels have a level number one greater than the level from which they are reached. For simplicity each dungeon level should only contain one down stairway with subsequent stairway tiles being re-rolled.



## Cave Spider (Good, 2/2)

Speed: 8

Scale: 1

Special: Cling, Toxin 3, Infra-Vision

This common form of large spider is about 4 ft. in diameter and weighs about 200 lbs. Its a hunting spider actively searching for its prey.

## Darkling (Great, 3/4)

Speed: 6

Scale: -1

Special: Cling, Grapple 2, Sunlight Susceptibility 3, Night Vision

Darklings live in the dark places of the world hunting in small parties of 3-6 individuals. They are intelligent, have been known to use tools and crave the flesh of other sentient beings. .

## Dragonet (Good, 1/2)

Speed: 6/18

Scale: -3

Special: Flight

Dragonets are small semi-intelligent relatives of dragons. They inhabit caverns and mountainous regions, build nests and collect shiny things to decorate them. Dragonets may breath fire as a 5/10/15 Offense 3 ranged attack instead of their normal melee attack. Dragonets are highly prized as familiars.

## Feral Nauga (Fair, 4/2)

Speed: 3

Scale: 3

Special: Quadruped, Battle Rage

Feral Nauga freely wander the plains in great herds and are usually quite docile unless provoked.

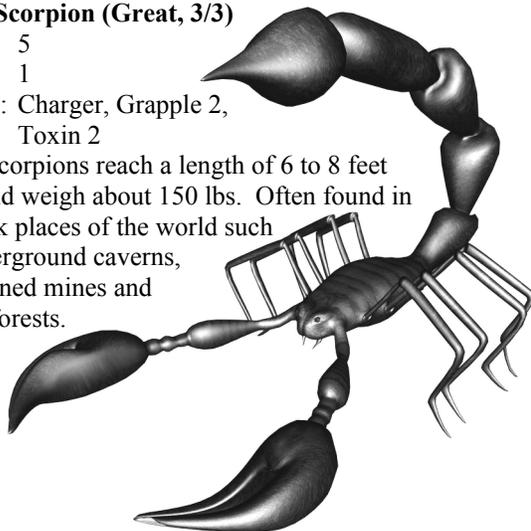
## Giant Scorpion (Great, 3/3)

Speed: 5

Scale: 1

Special: Charger, Grapple 2, Toxin 2

Giant scorpions reach a length of 6 to 8 feet long and weigh about 150 lbs. Often found in the dark places of the world such as underground caverns, abandoned mines and dense forests.



## Imp (Good, 1,1)

Speed: 4/12

Scale: -4

Special: Flight, Night Vision

These small demonic creatures are mischief makers, loving nothing better than to lead would be heroes on a merry chase. Imps have a limited understanding of magic allowing them to cast the Image and Clumsiness spells once per hour as if cast by someone with Good skill. Although they can be annoying at times many elder magus employ Imps as familiars.



## Orc Archer (Great, 2/2)

Speed: 5

Scale: 0

Special: Pain Tolerance 1, Night Vision, Sunlight Susceptibility 1, Heavy Leather, Long Bow, Hand Axe

Orc Archers prefer fighting from a distance, letting their less skilled brethren keep their quarry busy while they pick them off one by one with arrows. In emergencies they will fight in melee combat but will usually flee if given the opportunity.

## Orc Shaman (Fair, 1/1)

Speed: 3

Scale: 0

Special: Night Vision, Sunlight Susceptibility 1  
Orcish shaman have a limited understanding of magic allowing them to cast any Fair spell as if cast by a magus with Fair skill. All mana used in such spells is drawn from the shamans life force.

## “What’s the Catch?”

by Ann Dupuis, Paul Dupuis, and Steffan O’Sullivan

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The halfling spoke truth: there is indeed an abandoned dragon hoard in these remote mountains. No sign of a dragon in years. What’s the catch?

### The Setting

“What’s the Catch?” can be set anywhere near mountainous wilderness. We’ve provided information on Baron Sherfield and the village of Sherville as the jumping-off point for the adventure, but you can substitute these with a local lord and village or town of your choosing.

### About Baron Sherfield

Aidan Sherfield is a middle-aged, strong, tall, bearded fighter. Several years ago, as a reward for exemplary military service to the Crown, Aidan was awarded the title Baron and a large tract of land on the edge of the kingdom. The Baron and his family and followers have been struggling to carve a home out of this remote wilderness location. While the land they’ve cleared is proving productive beyond all their hopes, it’s a dangerous corner of the world, far from the comforts of civilization and close to the perils of the mountainous wilderness. The Baron has proven himself a generous lord (at least as generous as his means allow) and a strong leader.

### Baron Aidan Sherfield (Human)

#### Attributes:

Strength (Good), Agility (Fair), Reason (Good), Perception (Fair), Will (Great), Health (Fair)

#### Skills:

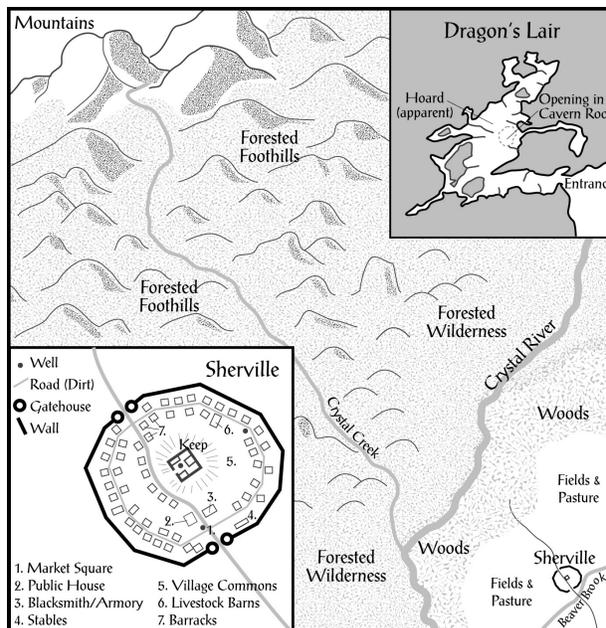
Animal Handling (Fair), Survival-Forest (Good), Survival-Mountain (Good), Hunting (Fair), Riding-Horse (Fair), Tracking (Fair), Lore-Administration (Good), Blade-Bastard Sword (Great), Missile-Long Bow (Fair), Teaching (Fair).

#### Gifts:

Reputation (+1), Magic Resistance

#### Faults:

Vow (to make his Barony and its people prosperous)



### About the Barony of Sherfield

The tract of land officially comprising the Barony of Sherfield is large (several square miles). In actuality, though, the barony consists of a single outpost precariously situated in the wilderlands beyond the expanse of civilized lands. The Baron’s holdings consist of a stone keep on a hill (“Castle Sherfield”) surrounded by the village of Sherville. A strong wall with turreted gates protects the village and keep. About 300 people live in Sherville.

The mercenaries and soldiers in the Baron’s employ stay busy protecting Sherville from attacks by hostile humanoids and chasing off or hunting down dangerous wildlife. They also do manual labor; wall- and road-building, barn-raising, forest clearing, and the like. Barracks and stables within Sherville house the Baron’s soldiers and horses.

Sherville’s bakery and granaries are also within the village wall. There’s a mill on the river (“Beaver Brook”) outside the village’s walls, near newly-cleared fields. As the Baron and his men gradually make the area safer from humanoids and other menaces, a few intrepid souls have been building their houses and farms outside the village walls.

There are very few amenities in Sherville. For example, the village isn’t prosperous enough to support an inn. The closest thing to a tavern is the Public House, which serves as the town meeting house as well as a place where villagers can gather to quaff a quick ale at midday break or while away the evening hours with their friends.

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